LANDSEER'S WORKS

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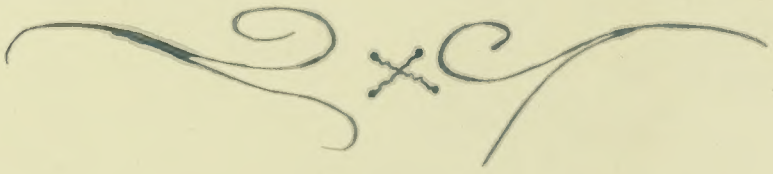

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SIR EDWIN LANDSEER, R.A. PINX.ᵗ

CHAS MOTTRAM, SCULPT

THE STAG AT BAY.

LONDON: VIRTUE & C.ᵒ LIMITED.

LANDSEER'S WORKS

COMPRISING

FORTY-FOUR STEEL ENGRAVINGS

AND ABOUT TWO HUNDRED WOODCUTS.

The Bloodhound.

LONDON: VIRTUE & Co. LIMITED.

THE STAG AT BAY.

HERE we have before us some of this great artist's best work; for the subject unites Highland scenery and surroundings, such as he loved best to paint, with those emotions of the nobler animals which he of all others could well portray. A fine stag has been brought to bay in the shallow water at the edge of a Highland lake, after a long chase, by two of the celebrated Scotch deerhounds. One of them lies disabled before him: the other is barking its loudest defiance, yet hesitates to rush in; though by the half-frightened yet still determined look of its eye we see it feels the crisis has come.

It has often been objected that the expressions of Landseer's animals are too human; by the study of such a picture as this the objection is fully understood, and, we think, fully answered. The execution is faultless; and if we cannot bear to gaze long on the canvas, it is because our feelings of pity will not permit us to contemplate unmoved a scene of intense animal suffering depicted by so masterly a hand. The case might be different did the reality come before us in the full excitement of the chase.

This picture was painted in 1846, and exhibited at the Royal Academy in the same year. The original now belongs to Lady E. Pringle. It has been engraved by Thomas Landseer in 1848, by A. Zobel, and in the present instance by Charles Mottram.

OXEN AT THE TANK: GENEVA.

GENEVA was one of the places visited by Landseer during his tour on the Continent in 1840, and to that visit we owe the present drawing. He was travelling under physicians' orders, and seems to have laid aside all thought of serious work for the time, merely amusing himself by sketching here and there. Doubtless he was struck by the apathy displayed in many continental towns during the hot summer days. The oxen have probably just completed some work in the streets, and, though their thirst is quenched, neither they nor their mistress seem anxious to set off again. The woman's hat and the coat thrown over the back of one of the beasts are skilfully put in, so as to relieve the stiffness of the positions in which all three are standing.

The original, which was in the possession of the late H. W. F. Bolckow, Esq., is simply a pen-and-ink drawing, slightly tinted: it has not been engraved before.

THE CAVALIER'S PETS.

THE two Blenheim spaniels here represented belonged to the late Mr. Vernon, at whose request the picture was undertaken. A rough sketch of the dogs was made during a visit of the artist to him at his residence in Pall Mall, but nothing further was done for some time. At last Mr. Vernon met Landseer one day in the street, and reminded him of his promise. Two days later the picture was sent in completed.

This is often quoted as an instance of Landseer's power of working rapidly; for, hasty as the execution must have been, no one has yet been able to point out any want of care in the finish. The extremely natural and lifelike expressions of the heads are very striking.

The picture was exhibited at the British Institution in 1845 as "King Charles' Spaniels:" it is now in the National Gallery, having been presented to the nation by R. Vernon, Esq., in 1847. It was first engraved by John Outrim in 1850, and afterwards by A. Lucas in 1875.

THE STABLE.

"THE Stable," like "Oxen at the Tank," is one of the sketches which Landseer brought home with him from his continental tour in 1840, and is perhaps the best known of them all. It is remarkable that none of these sketches were afterwards worked out on canvas; and it has already been suggested that they were taken merely with a view to amusement and the filling up of an idle half-hour here and there.

There is a special beauty and value in a sketch of this kind, for it is only in such that the natural taste of the artist is best distinguished. He may throw his best efforts into a work which he knows is to bring him fame and fortune; but then he must find it hard to avoid considering, at the expense of his own, the tastes of those whose eye he is painting to please. And so a certain amount of formality will very often creep in; so small as only to be discerned by comparison with a piece executed under circumstances like the present. Landseer was an extremely natural painter, so that we do not expect to find any marked contrast between this and a more elaborate picture; yet here who can help noticing that complete rendering of animal expression by a few skilful touches for which he is so justly famous?

Of all the engravings of Sir Edwin Landseer's works produced by Mr. C. G. Lewis, perhaps not one is better than the present; the horses are unusually well reproduced.

The original is in the collection of George Gurney, Esq., Eastbourne.

PEACE.

AMONGST the engravings with which our modern English taste adorns the walls of our rooms, those of "Peace" and its companion picture—"War"—take a prominent place; for indeed the subjects appeal to men of all ages and occupations, young and old, rich and poor. The picture is carefully worked out on a fixed design. The artist desires to give us his definition of a time of Peace; and the objects represented are placed before us, not to attract attention for themselves, but simply to assist in working out the general idea. It is in this that the strength of the picture really consists. He well reminds us of the blessings of peace by laying the scene on the cliffs of Dover; thus turning our thoughts into the train of all our ancient enmities with France, and reminding us to be thankful for the security of our island home. There must always, we think, be one weak point in any engraving of this picture. The old mortar which occupies a prominent place in the foreground is in reality covered with rust, whereas, looking only at the engraving, it might just have left the foundry.

The original picture was painted in 1846, and was presented to the nation by R. Vernon, Esq., in 1847. It has been three times engraved: by J. Cousen and L. Stocks, R.A., in 1846, by T. L. Atkinson in 1850, and by Zobel in 1871.

SAFE!

FROM a note on this drawing we learn that it was sketched at Oatlands in 1838: it much resembles in style some of the artist's earlier drawings. For instance, there are strong points of resemblance between it and "The Intruder," a well-known picture produced in his eighteenth year. One cannot fail to notice the admirable contrast between the gravely expectant eye of the old spaniel and the sprightly eagerness of the terrier. Slight as are the touches by which the cat's face is figured, there is enough to indicate that she is not quite satisfied as to the safety of her resting-place.

Why should so noble-looking an animal as this spaniel condescend to hurry after or wait upon the insignificant object of his anxious looks? Truly this is another of those nature portraits which carry Landseer's fame home to the unlearned and uneducated in all parts of our country!

The original drawing is in the possession of John Fowler, Esq., C.E.; it has not yet passed through the hands of any other engraver than Mr. C. G. Lewis.

WAR.

WHAT Englishman is not conversant with the details of the battle of Waterloo? Who does not feel himself to have been almost an eye-witness of the stubborn fighting at Hougoumont? We call to mind Lord Anglesea's splendid charge with the Royals, Greys, and Enniskilleners, and the vain attempt of the French Cuirassiers to withstand them. This episode of war was almost certainly in the artist's mind when the present picture was painted; just such a scene might well have occurred. Two dead men, a dead and a dying horse, lying amidst the smoking ruins of a cottage—how effective in pointing out the *realities* of war! Those who lightly talk over the chances of their country's being shortly engaged with an enemy, and look forward to a war as lending an additional interest to the daily papers, will do well to have this picture near them. And it will help all of us to be grateful to the statesmen whose care and forethought have so often kept England out of the vortex of continental quarrels.

The original picture was painted in 1846, and was presented to the nation by R. Vernon, Esq., in 1847. It has been three times engraved: by L. Stocks, R.A., in 1846, by T. L. Atkinson in 1850, and by Zobel in 1871.

"THERE'S NO PLACE LIKE HOME."

THIS picture was exhibited at the British Institution in 1842. Underneath it was written, by way of title, the latter of these two familiar lines from the well-known ballad:—

> "'Mid pleasures and palaces though we may roam,
> Be it ever so humble, there's no place like home."

And humble enough the terrier's home is; for even in the dog-world an old barrel with a hole in the top cannot be considered a very aristocratic dwelling. It is certainly strange how often dogs will prefer to lie anywhere than in their kennels; perhaps, after domesticating them, we should allow them a rather larger share in the luxuries by which we are surrounded.

Our rough little friend's face expresses the deepest thankfulness for having, doubtless after a long wandering, again found what, though poor, is after all his "home."

The snail, with its house on its back, is also at home; and its presence shows that the dog has been away for some hours.

The original is in the Sheepshanks Gallery: it has not been otherwise engraved.

ROUT OF COMUS.

THE original of this engraving is the finished sketch for one of the frescoes in the Pavilion in the grounds of Buckingham Palace: it was bequeathed to the nation by Mr. Jacob Bell, and is now at South Kensington.

The scene is taken from Milton's poem, "Comus, a Masque"—we are familiar with the word as being that from which "comedy" is derived. Comus, according to Milton, was an enchanter, who changed into monsters the travellers through the wood in which he took up his abode. An unfortunate lady has fallen into his hands, but he has in vain tried to induce her to drink of his enchanted cup. Her two brothers, who have long been seeking her, at this moment rush in with drawn swords, and put to rout the motley crew. Comus with his wand is conspicuous in the foreground; what was once a woman is trying to arrest his flight. The picture will be best understood after reading the scene in Milton.

HEAD OF A DEERHOUND.

IT is fortunate that Landseer's favourite deerhound "Hafed," of which we have here a portrait, did not in all ways resemble Sir Walter Scott's celebrated dog of that breed, "Maida," of which we are told that he could not endure the sight of an artist, and would frequently show his displeasure forcibly. Belonging to the majestic old breed of Scotch deerhounds, Hafed was well worthy Landseer's pencil; and the portrait is lifelike to a degree. The picture was painted in 1834, and a print of it subsequently appeared in the *Sportsman's Annual*. For this it was lithographed by T. Fairland, who cut off the neck between the ear and the collar, rejecting all the lower part.

It will be at once seen that the accompanying engraving by Mr. C. G. Lewis reproduces the *force* of the original exceedingly well.

THE THREE DOGS.

THERE are good reasons for supposing that this drawing is the result of three distinct studies, though we must confess there is no direct evidence to that effect. Drawn in 1842 or 1843, at a time when Landseer was often engaged in making sketches of dogs belonging to the Queen and the Prince Consort, it is quite likely to have been composed from three such portraits.

The terrier and the sitting bloodhound have their attention fixed on a common object, but the third dog is looking in a different direction. There is just the same amount of watchfulness expressed in the eyes of all three; that is, if we allow the less dignified terrier to be more excited in proportion than the solemn-looking hounds.

There is a certain contrast in placing the terrier in such company, though the picture depends but little on it; such a contrast is fully worked out in the well-known "Dignity and Impudence." The shrewd and cheerful terrier may be more pleasant to us, and more of a companion, than the graceful animal which sits looking over his shoulder.

THE EAGLE'S NEST.

ON first looking at this painting many are struck with the comparatively small size of the eagles, and are disposed to give the picture some such title as "The Rocks surrounding an Eagle's Nest." Yet this proportion is soon seen to be necessary, if we are to realise that the birds have chosen no mere molehill of a few hundred feet high, but a place high up amid the massy crags of a mountain.

It must but seldom have happened, even to the most venturesome young mountaineer, to have come upon a scene like this: the eagle's nest, like some grim old feudal baron's castle, is complete only in and by itself; knowing but one dread, lest other life invade its solitude.

The spot seems to have been chosen by the eagles principally for the convenience of the ledge on which the female bird is sitting, which also seems to afford some shelter to the nest below.

Landseer has devoted few, very few, pictures to the feathered portion of the animal kingdom. In the best known of these the eagle is again prominent: we allude to the "Swannery invaded by Eagles." "The Eagle's Nest" was painted in 1833, and exhibited at the British Institution in 1834. A woodcut of it by W. Thomas bears the date 1861: this was made for the *Illustrated London News*. The present is the only steel engraving.

The original was presented to the nation by the late Mr. Sheepshanks in 1857, and is now to be seen at South Kensington.

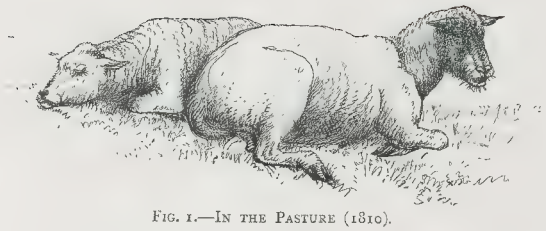


Fig. 1.—In the Pasture (1810).

LANDSEER'S WORKS.

CHAPTER I.

1808—16.

FOR the boy who, at the age of eight, could sketch from nature the little group of sheep with which this chapter is headed a career had evidently been marked out by Nature, if he chose to follow her guidance. There are observable in it not only a careful imitation of the animals, but considerable skill in drawing, observation of character and habit, a certain instinct of composition, and management of light and shade, and many other qualities which are never seen in the work of a boy, unless that boy be like Landseer was—an artist born. But, as will be seen by a comparison of the date placed under the cut on the next page, he had attained some mastery with the pencil at least a year before he drew these sheep. It was when six or seven years old, *i.e.* in 1808 or 1809, according to a memorandum by Miss Eliza Meteyard, published in Mr. Stephens's interesting memoirs of the artist, that his father, John Landseer, who was not only a good engraver, but a writer and lecturer upon Art and archæology, made him sketch a cow from nature in a field on the Finchley Road.* It was probably not far from this field that the sheep were drawn, as this became for some years afterwards his favourite sketching ground. Between his home in Foley Street and Hampstead, then open fields for the most part, the boy used to sketch till he was fetched by his father in the evening, who would criticize his work, and often make him correct it on the spot. He was therefore not only provided with natural talent, but with a natural studio and a

* He drew, however, and, according to Mr. Stephens, "drew well and studied animal character and humour thoroughly at the age of five."—Vide "Memoirs of Sir E. Landseer," by F. G. Stephens, p. 25. George Bell & Sons, 1874.

natural master, and he could scarcely have produced such good early work except with the joint assistance of the three.

But Landseer had an indoor as well as an outdoor studio, and this was Exeter Change. Here he used to go and sketch from the wild beasts which were then shown there. His earliest etching was made from a sketch by himself of a lion's head in profile, and on the same plate his brother Thomas, his elder by seven years, etched a head of a tiger drawn by Edwin, also in profile. Nature thus provided him, from his earliest years, with an engraver, and one who was peculiarly fitted to interpret his work.

FIG. 2.—LIONESS AND CUBS (1809).

Among all his many engravers there is none who has engraved so many of his works as his brother Thomas, and none who has shown such sympathy with his style and touch and feeling. Far more extraordinary as a design, though not as a piece of manipulative skill, is the drawing of a "Lioness and Cubs" (Fig. 2), of which we give a woodcut. Though very defective in drawing, there is great vigour in the attitude of the lioness, and a true sense of the cubby spirit in her offspring, especially in the cub which is trying to get on its mother's back. Whether this was entirely a study from the life is doubtful. The composition, notwithstanding the proof we have of Landseer's

Senegal Lion (1811).

In the Jungle (1811).

Plate I.

precocity, seems impossible for a child of seven, and there is much similarity between the head of this lioness and that of a lioness in a picture by Stubbs, now in the Museum at South Kensington. There is, however, no reason for thinking that it was copied, any more than the vigorous, but also badly drawn, design of "In the Jungle," the lower illustration in PLATE I. It seems certain that his imagination, especially in connection with wild beasts, was exercised early, or he could not have produced his pictures of "A Lion enjoying his Repast" and "A Lion disturbed at his Repast," which were exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1820, or the undoubtedly original and masterly composition of the "Contending Group of Leopard, Tiger, and Lion," which was engraved by his brother Thomas, and published in 1823 in a volume entitled

FIG. 3.—STUDY OF A LION (1812).

"Twenty-six Engravings of Lions, Tigers, Panthers, and Leopards, by Stubbs, Rembrandt, Spilsbury, Reydinger, and Edwin Landseer, with an Essay on the Carnivora, by J. Landseer."

The other drawings of lions which adorn this chapter, viz. "The Senegal Lion from Exeter Change,"* at the top of PLATE I., and the "Study of a Lion" (Fig. 3), belonging to Mr. Dafforne, are also singularly remarkable, and for opposite reasons: the first from the evident faithfulness of the study, and from its likeness in attitude and statuesque calm to the last and greatest of his achievements in this direction—the

* This lion was possibly the same animal as that from which he made two drawings in 1814, one of which was engraved by his brother Thomas, and the other by his father, and the name of which was "Nero." It is certain at all events that "Nero" was a Senegal Lion, and was exhibited at Exeter Change.

lions in Trafalgar Square; the latter as the first indication given, as far as we know, of the talent so often thereafter to be happily exercised of imbuing animals with a semi-human expression. It appears here in its very earliest phase, probably born of the pleasure which we must all of us have felt in tracing a human likeness in other things, whether a cloud, a fire, or an animal. Landseer cultivated it till he made it a specialty of his art, the source of many a quaint and humorous fancy, the barb of much good-natured satire, with the result of giving harmless pleasure to thousands who could not rise to the level of the pure poetry of his noblest work.

The sight of lions and tigers is only an incident in our lives, and the painting of

FIG. 4.—STUDIES IN A FARMYARD (1810).

them only an incident in Landseer's art, which was mainly devoted to the study of the form and character of the animals of his own country, especially those most closely connected with human life. But it was far from an unimportant incident, as his early studies of wild beasts show, more distinctly perhaps than any other of his studies of wild life, that his imagination could be vigorously employed in realising what life is to animals, rather than what their life seems to us, and because they show an enthusiasm and a resolute struggle with difficulties, both of thought and execution, which contrast with the easy masterliness of most of his other work. Of all wild beasts the lion

laid the strongest hold upon his mind, and of all its qualities, real or ascribed, its power and its dignity. Whatever discoveries naturalists and travellers may make derogatory to the time-honoured character of the royal beast, his appearance, at least for the artist, and especially the British artist, will be a sufficient title to preserve his regard for ever as the type of natural nobility. Nor do we think it a transcendental notion that Landseer's early sympathy with and studies from the kingliest of animals

FIG. 5.—STUDIES IN A FARMYARD (1810).

had much influence in forming the style of his art, of which breadth and simplicity, calmness and strength, courage and sincerity, are qualities which are never absent.

But we must now come back for a while to the little boy Edwin sketching in the fields near Hampstead, and returning home with his father to make his first essays in etching. We have mentioned his first etching, which was of a head of a lion; what was possibly his second, executed at the age of eight, was made from his own drawing

of heads of a donkey, sheep, and boar, in the possession of Mr. George Gurney. The woodcut which we give of this drawing, "Studies in a Farmyard," 1810 (Fig. 4), makes unnecessary any comments on the wonderful skill of the boy both in drawing and etching; but it may be observed with what truth the different characters of the animals are seized, especially the mixture of patience and anxiety in the profile of the sheep, and the sleepy sensuality of the boar. The other heads are studies of the manner in which the different animals approach their food with their lips. On page 5 will be

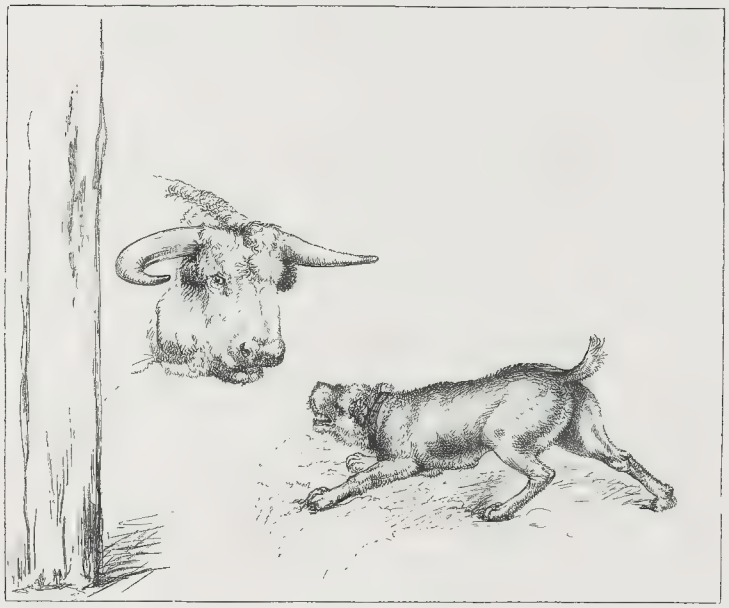


FIG. 6.—BAITING THE BULL (1810).

found another study of the art of eating, this time the animal is a cow; and another of a pig (Fig. 5), this time a female, sleeping. This and the following cut of "Baiting the Bull" (Fig. 6) belong to the same year (1810), together with the study of sheep which heads this chapter, and the study of donkeys which concludes it. Altogether these make a very fair sample of a year's work by a boy of eight, and show that his labours were not only well sustained, but well guided, all being directed towards one object, viz. the study of the life and character of animals.

It helped the boy to make sure and quick progress in his art that its object was

always the same, without tentative efforts in other directions. Many artists, like the late John Philip, have to wait till middle age ere their special talent declares itself by meeting, by accident perhaps, with the class of subject in which alone they can achieve success. One man, after painting landscapes indifferently for years, will suddenly produce a portrait which will be as a beam of light to him, and show him his future path to fame; another, gifted with unusual power of pathos, will fruitlessly and with apparent perverseness waste the best part of his life in his desire to be a second Hogarth. Sometimes timidity, sometimes misdirected ambition, will make a man miss his proper path, but to most in early youth, before the mind is fully formed,

FIG. 7.—A PERSIAN CAT (1810—11).

there is a period of hesitation, of comparative darkness, where the only thing certain is the presence of an artistic gift which impels its possessor to draw whatever presents itself to be drawn, without any marked preference for a special object. But with Landseer there was never any such indecision, no time wasted, no steps to be retraced, not even from imperfect guidance; his road was straight before him and not to be mistaken, and, as if to prevent any possibility of divergence, he had a father and a brother to guide him and to give him a helping hand.

The only thing wanting to point the foregoing observations is that his first study should have been a dog; and perhaps it was, but the dog in "Baiting the Bull," 1810 (Fig. 6), is his first drawing of that animal of which we have any note. This dog,

however, does not look like a first attempt, and though not so well drawn as the other animals of the same year, shows more spirit than any. Its spirit is, we fear, more certain than its breed, which is certainly not that of what we know as a thoroughbred bulldog; perhaps when bulls were still baited the breed was different, or the dogs actually used for baiting were not thoroughbred. If the head of the bovine animal were not so unmistakably male, we should have been inclined to think the drawing was meant to illustrate the house that Jack built, in which a dog whose breed is unstated was tossed by a cow with a crumpled horn.

Dogs are restless animals, and unless asleep are not good sitters for portraits, especially in the open air, where Landseer first studied. The lazy habits of sheep and pigs and cattle in the fields, of cats indoors, and of wild beasts in cages, are sufficient

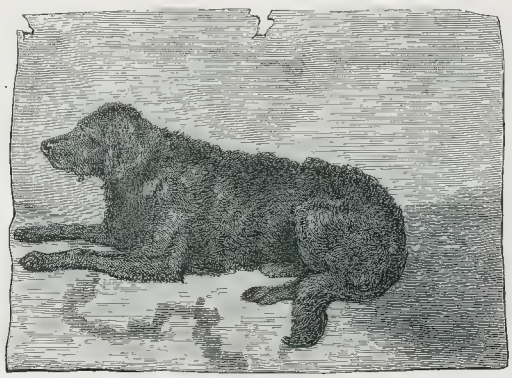


Fig. 8.—A Retriever (1810—11).

reasons why these animals should form the subjects of Landseer's early studies, but it is certain that if there had been at this time a dog in his home in Foley Street, he would have drawn him as he did the cat. The cat was asleep, and was drawn by him in 1809, and etched by Mr. Thomas Landseer in 1823.

We may, however, be mistaken in supposing that the cat of 1809 was a cat that dwelt at Foley Street with himself and his family; it may have been a friend's cat, like the one engraved from a drawing in the possession of the Rev. C. M. E. Collins, which the artist has quaintly verified by the inscription, "Sketched at Maldon by the little boy Edwin, when ten years old, now Sir E. Landseer, an old boy, 1866." This sketch, "A Persian Cat" (Fig. 7), or rather drawing, for the attempt at finish is elaborate, is, we think, more like a juvenile production than any of the earlier performances of the artist of which we have given engravings. To say nothing of the very obvious

error in the drawing of the top of the stool on which pussy is sitting, there is a want of life about it and a waste of work. It is more like a stuffed (and a badly stuffed) animal than a live one, although the careful attempt to render the fur and to show the formation of the body deserves praise. The same remarks will apply to the drawing of "A Retriever" (Fig. 8), belonging to the same gentleman, where the same ambition after finish observable in most young work ends in the same unfortunate result, viz. a general flatness and lifelessness of effect. Here, however, the young artist has been a little more successful, partly because his desire for definition is not so

FIG. 9.—STUDY OF GOATS (1811).

much balked by the fur, which, though longer than he knew quite well how to manage, does not so completely disguise the anatomy of the animal.* As showing the same difficulties, but partially conquered, our next illustration is interesting: "Study of Goats," 1811 (Fig. 9), belonging to Mr. Gurney. In this, though the heads and horns are well drawn, the bodies are shapeless and the legs stiff; defects due, we think, in a great measure, to the long hair, which hides the framework and destroys

* These two drawings of the Persian Cat and Retriever were drawn at the house of Mr. W. W. Simpson, of Maldon, where the young Edwin went for change of air. They were given by him to Lucy Potter, then in the service of Mr. Simpson. See *Art Journal* for December, 1876.

outline. All these drawings show how impossible it is, even with the highest natural gifts, to draw figures correctly without a knowledge of their anatomy, especially if, as in the case of long-haired animals, nature has reduced the outward indications of her design to the minimum. To take, for example, the earlier animals of Landseer which illustrate this chapter; it will, we think, be found on comparison that their success is in nearly inverse proportion to the length of their hair. All these considerations prove to us that it was high time for the artist to begin to study anatomy, and that he thought so too, and did it, is apparent from "An Anatomical Study," 1812 (Fig. 10), belonging to Messrs. Graves, of the skull of a pointer, in the corner of which is

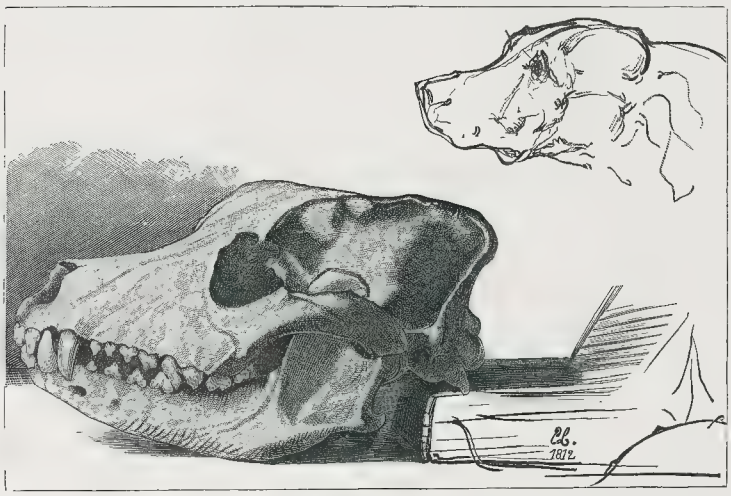


FIG. 10.—AN ANATOMICAL STUDY (1812).

probably the first well-drawn and well-modelled head of a dog which ever came from his hand. The importance not only of anatomical drawing, but of dissection, was enforced upon him the year after by the unfortunate Haydon.

Though Landseer seems to have drawn other animals before he attempted a dog, and seems to have drawn them better at first, yet after he once began to draw dogs he never rested till he had mastered them thoroughly, and they hereafter were to be his favourite subjects throughout his life; but as we intend to devote a special chapter to his treatment of these—the most human of animals, in spite of anatomy and Mr. Darwin—we shall confine our remarks in this chapter to his progress in skill in drawing them, and not further dwell upon his remarkable love for and sympathy with every

shade of the canine nature. That his study of anatomy was sincere and thorough is shown by the fact, recorded by Mr. Dafforne,* that "the margin of the paper on which the drawing ('An Anatomical Study') is made is covered with references to the different parts of the skull, and their proper anatomical names are given."

The dog in Fig. 11 ("Among the Turnips"), though in advance of the other dogs figured previously, is still very stiff and imperfect in drawing, and, though it bears the same date as the anatomical study, must surely have been drawn before it. The hand that had sketched the skull, and the life-like head above it, could never have been satisfied with this shapeless muzzle, unless indeed the subject were another *lusus naturæ* (see Fig. 12); and the disparity between the hind and fore quarters of the animal shows conclusively that his study of the anatomy of the animal had not

FIG. 11.—AMONG THE TURNIPS (1812).

extended with much result to the rest of the body. His growing interest in dogs is nevertheless shown by this painful effort to represent a setter in its characteristic attitude, and also by two other studies of the same year, entered in Mr. Graves's careful catalogue of Landseer's works: one of which is a portrait of "Racket," in the possession of Mr. Robert Rawlinson, C.B., which was exhibited in the collection of Landseer's works shown in 1874 at Burlington House; and the other a drawing of a "Brown Mastiff Sleeping," which was sold at Sir John Swinburne's sale in 1861 for seventy guineas.

Of his studies of cattle belonging (probably) to this early period none is more curious than that which is styled "A Lusus Naturæ" (Fig. 12), of which the original pencil sketch, like so many of those engraved in these pages, belongs to Mr. George

* *Art Journal*, July, 1877.

Gurney. Where did Landseer see this? Was it tethered in a field near Hampstead, or was it exhibited at a fair? We have ourselves seen an unfortunate beast of the same kind with a similar excrescence, but there was no doubt in that case what the excrescence was—viz. another and smaller pair of hind legs, with tail complete, which depended in a ludicrous and pitiable manner from somewhere near the middle of the unhappy creature's back. Mr. Dafforne* thinks that it must be "a cluster of horns which nature, in one of her strangest freaks, has placed where they are." We, however, remembering the monstrosity we have seen, are inclined to think that the

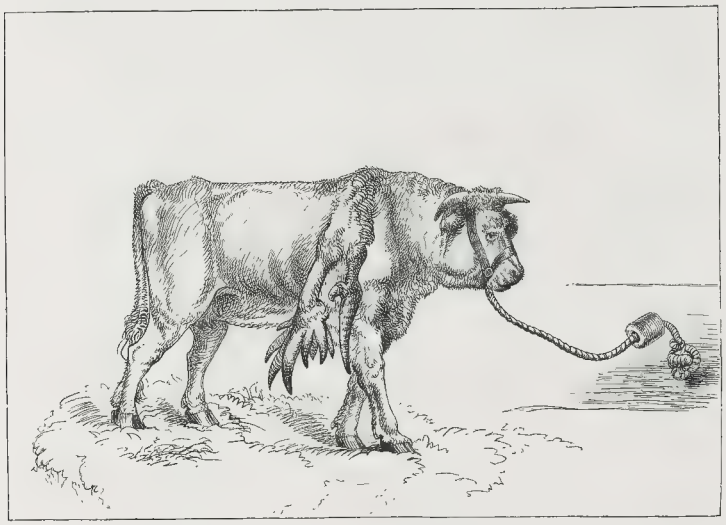


Fig. 12.—A Lusus Naturæ.

hideous outgrowth is in this case also superfluous hindquarters, the hoofs of which have grown into the semblance of horns, and that its position is accounted for by stoppage of its growth.

The next group that we give, though undoubtedly drawn from nature in England, reminds us much more of the Dutch type of cattle, as drawn by Cuyp, than the animals we are accustomed to see in our own fields. The drawing, "In the Meadow" (Fig. 13), is remarkable for the pains taken to show the formations of the muscles, and the undulations of the hides due to other causes. The characters of the beasts are also well

* *Art Journal*, January, 1876.

"differentiated"—the sturdy sullenness of the bull, and the bland passivity of his mate. Still finer is the "Short-horn Bull" (1812) at the bottom of PLATE II.—a brute of a higher order of intelligence, whom it would be dangerous to disturb from his selfish meditations. These two drawings were combined by Landseer (Edwin) in one etching, with fine effect, and nothing can illustrate better his natural skill in composition than these two drawings and the etching which combines them: it is difficult to say which

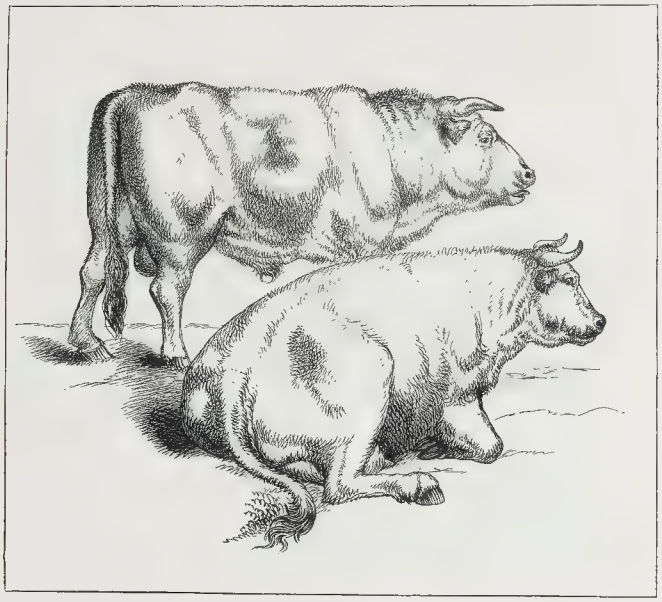


FIG. 13.—IN THE MEADOW.

of the three is the best balanced. On the same plate as this etching is another fine group of cattle.

We should, from our engraving, have been inclined to give even greater praise to the cat at the top of PLATE II., both from the great difficulty of drawing that animal and the apparently exquisite finish of its fur; but Mr. Dafforne informs us that it is taken from an oil-picture which has all the appearance of very juvenile handiwork; yet we are not sure that an oil-picture, capable of such a beautiful translation into black and white, is not a more wonderful achievement for a boy of eleven than his etchings of this period. The work shows at all events a great progress in two or three years since he

Quite at Home (1813).

A Short-horn Bull (1812).

Plate II.

attempted to draw the "Persian Cat" (Fig. 7) at the house of his friend, Mr. W. W. Simpson, at Maldon. This animal is fully alive from the tip of its nose to the tip of its tail, it is well put together, its attitude is easy and characteristic, its face intelligent, and its form thoroughly understood. Three years later (1816) he had mastered even Persian cats, as is proved by the exquisite etchings by his brother Thomas of "Head and Tail of a Persian Cat from Maldon" and "Persian Cats at a Window," of which we wish we were able to give impressions here.

In turning over these sketches, arranged as far as possible in chronological order, it is curious to mark their inequality in execution: in one sketch he seems to have arrived at mastery, in another he seems to have sunk back into pupilhood. One thinks at first that the sketches have been missorted, but on examination the dates affixed

Fig. 14.—A Tournament (1812).

are sufficient proof to the contrary, and reasons for the difference have to be sought elsewhere. They are generally discoverable either in the greater difficulty of the subjects of the less successful attempts, as in the case of long-haired animals, upon which we have already remarked, or in the fact that the subjects are new and have been studied less. It is not without pleasure that the conclusion is arrived at that the boy, though unusually gifted, was a boy after all, and that the comparative value of his work depended quite as much upon circumstances, and the comparative progress he made quite as much upon application, as in the case of the dullest boys. It is a very refreshing discovery in connection with a young genius to find that his precocity is not abnormal, and that his development is natural and healthy. Edwin Landseer, early as his powers were cultivated, was no forced plant, no hothouse prodigy. Though he could soon produce work which had all the appearance of matured power, it was only within a

very limited range, and was simply the result of remarkable talent, combined with sound study, directed to the drawing of a few objects for which he had a natural predilection. He conquered his difficulties quicker than others, but they all had to be conquered. Details are wanting of his early life, but from what we do know, his work, if unusually steady for a boy of his age, was also performed under unusually healthy conditions. Instead of being cooped up in a room, his study was in the fields, and the subjects which he drew—the cows and the sheep, the donkeys and the dogs, even the lions and tigers—were such as are congenial and wholesome to the minds of all healthy boys, and were not likely to encourage the morbid activity of the intellect so often the fatal accompaniment of youthful prodigies.

That he retained all the love of fun, which such a curly-headed youngster as he

FIG. 15.—SHEEP-SHEARING (1813).

was should, is sufficiently plain from the sketch of "The Tournament" (Fig. 14), in which a hideous demon, in a military costume humorously unsuited to his wings and tail, is with a savage expression of delight pinning exactly through the middle of his breast-plate a being half-knight and half-fiend. What the meaning of this terrible encounter may be will probably never be known, but the drawing is remarkable for its spirit, especially the figure of the vanquished devil who is throwing up his arms and falling back. There is real power in the way his helpless agony is expressed by the curling of the talons of his feet: those of the left foot being curled downwards as if to grip the ground, those of the right curling upwards in sheer pain and despair. This was selected out of a number of juvenile sketches sold among the *débris* of the artist's

studio after his death.* This is the first drawing of anything like a human form of which we have any note.

In the next year, 1813,† the drawing of "Sheep-shearing" (Fig. 15) gives visible proof that he had begun to add to his studies of farm life those of men. A very careful study is this of a man engaged in the delicate operation of shearing, but bearing evident traces of an early attempt, especially in the foreshortening of the right arm and the drawing of the hands and face. Contrasted with the few clever touches with which a terrier's head is sketched in the corner of the same figure, it shows at once how much more study he had given to animals than to men, and also, we think, how much more natural aptitude he had for catching expression in animals than in men. As in this, his first drawing of the human figure, so in all, with a few remarkable exceptions, half-a-dozen touches of an animal would convey more interest and be more

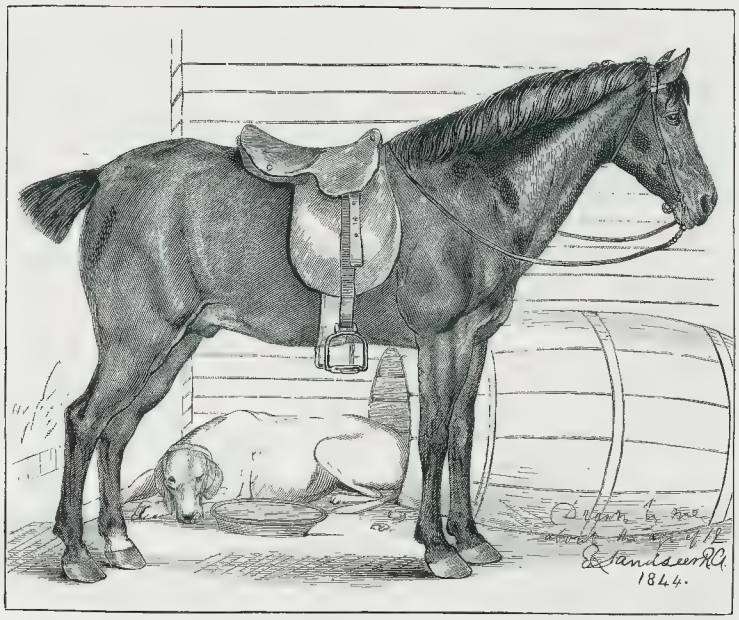
FIG. 16.—ASLEEP (1814).

full of artistic meaning than all the pains he could bestow upon a human subject; from which it must not be gathered that we wish to undervalue his power in representing human beings, which was considerable, if more limited.

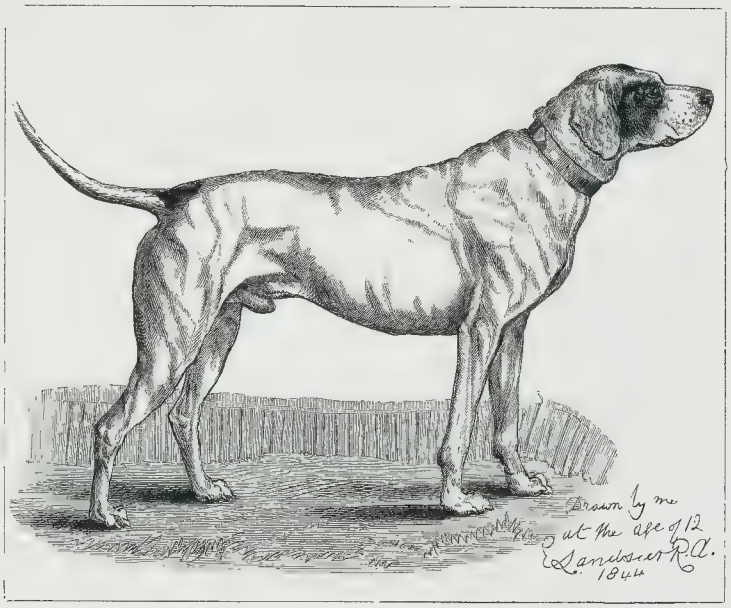
Our next drawing, "Asleep" (Fig. 16), is one of those which make us draw our breath with wonder, and marvel as to whether it can properly bear the date attached to it (1814), so full is it of apparently matured knowledge and power. Only three pigs sleeping certainly, but what pigs they are, and how thoroughly asleep! Drawn, too, in such difficult positions, foreshortened with success, and together making a composition original and beautiful. Nor should we omit to note that the outside pigs by themselves fail to balance one another, the little piggy on the left being too small to make up its part of the proportion; but the boy, with what must have been an instinctive sense of harmony, has supplied the little one's deficiency by introducing a few

* *Art Journal*, May, 1875.

† In this year he produced his first portrait, at least the first that has been engraved, viz. "C. Simmons, Esq., on a Pony," engraved by C. Turner, A.R.A., in 1826.



Waiting to Start (1814).



A Favourite Pointer (1814).

Plate III.

strokes of a wooden railing, which cleverly adjusts the scale. A similar instance of happy adjustment will be found in the introduction of the broom in PLATE II., "A Short-horn Bull."

Belonging also to this year (1814), one in which he evidently made much progress, are the four drawings on PLATES III. and IV. As relating to the subjects just treated, it will be well first to call attention to "A Cry of Distress" (PLATE IV.), in which we have a man in the act of ringing a pig. The man is evidently a pork-butcher from the steel by his side, and is proceeding with his task in a very business-like manner. Though by no means equal to the pig, this figure is very much in advance of that in Fig. 15, especially in the action and drawing of the arms. A likeness is traceable between the two men, both in features and expression. Though very unfinished,

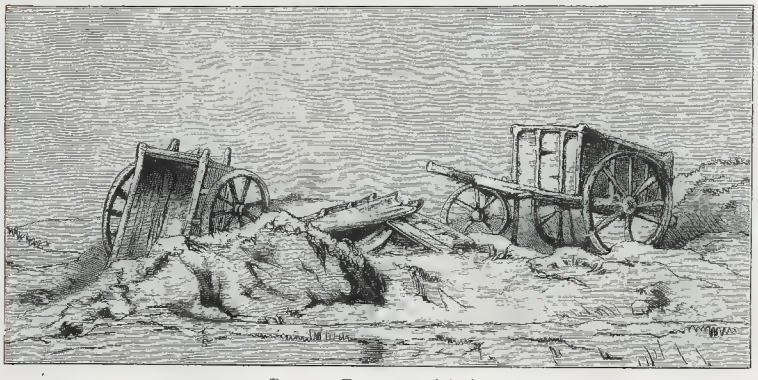


FIG. 17.—FARM CARTS (1815).

there is great power in the pig, whose frantic endeavours to withdraw are given to the life, the "cry of distress" is almost audible, while the hindquarters and tail are by themselves quite tragic. He may indeed have been said to have thoroughly mastered all pig difficulties in this year, in which he produced a pair of pictures called respectively "A French Hog" and "A British Boar:" the former lean, long-legged, and gaunt as a wolf; the other as fat and round and short-legged as even a British pig could be and yet stand upright. These were so successful that he repeated them twice with slight alterations. All six were separately etched by Thomas Landseer.

The other drawing on the same page represents five merino sheep, which are said to have been "the first imported into this country by the late Lord Somerville, who exhibited them at the cattle show in 1814, at the Old Sadler's Repository, Goswell Road. Young Landseer presented the original drawing to Mrs. Sadler, in acknowledgment of her kind-

A Cry of Distress (1814).

Merino Sheep (1814).

ness and attention during the five days he was sketching various animals 'on show.' In the distance is seen a spire, which, we are told, is that of Islington Church, then recently erected."* There is in the British Museum an etching by Thomas Landseer, after Edwin, of five sheep, of which three are identical in attitude and composition with those in our woodcut. These are the three to the left; but the two others are rams with twisted horns, separated from the left group and from each other, and are both lying down. The scene also is different, being a field with a hedge running across the plate behind the animals. Mr. Graves, in his catalogue, mentions a plate which is probably this, as etched by Thomas Landseer in 1818, from a drawing made by Edwin in 1813, and states that the sheep belonged to Squire Western. If the information in the *Art Journal* be correct, none of the sheep drawn in 1813, and belonging to Squire Western, could have been identical with any of those in our drawing, or the date given by Mr. Graves must be incorrect; but if they were a different lot it is singular that three of the sheep in each drawing should be so similar.

The animals on PLATE III. (1814) are specially interesting, as favourites of the young artist, who used to ride the pony and caress the dog. They belonged to Mr. George Wilson, uncle to the present possessor of the drawings, at whose residence at Walthamstow Landseer is said to have been a frequent visitor when a boy. They are both carefully done, but the dog is by far the better. His studies in anatomy have been of some value, and here for the first time we have a whole live standing dog, with every joint and muscle well defined, and the body as completely understood. The body looks somewhat ridgy and overworked, which may possibly be the effect of replacing his soft pencilling by the hard lines of a woodcut, but the labour is victorious, and such ill-made animals as Figs. 8 and 11 will never come from his pencil again. The next dog we give, drawn the next year, is a masterpiece.

This dog is "Brutus," PLATE V. (1815), a fine bull-terrier and a famous rat killer, which belonged to his early friend, Mr. W. W. Simpson, of Beleigh Grange, Essex, and was the father of another Brutus which belonged to Landseer himself when a boy. The first Brutus was often drawn by young Edwin. In Mr. Graves's catalogue two pictures of this dog are entered under the year 1815 (the same year as our drawing), one done for the top of a snuff-box, which is only a head, and another with a chestnut horse. Under the year 1817, in the same catalogue, we find a drawing of Old Brutus and a retriever, and in the Royal Academy catalogue of that year there is a portrait of Brutus. This, Mr. Graves thinks, was the head of Brutus exhibited at the Landseer Exhibition in 1874; and Mr. Stephens mentions another portrait of Brutus, whether the son or father is not quite clear, which was painted for Mr. Simpson in 1818, and represents "a white dog lying at the full length of his chain, with a

* *Art Journal*, January, 1876.

Brutus (1815).

The Attack (1815).

Plate V.

red earthenware dish." This year (1818) also produced a drawing of "Brutus with Two Dead Rats." We think it probable that all these were studies of the same dog, and that Brutus the younger was not immortalised till the year 1821, when he appeared with two other dogs, Boxer and Vixen, all belonging to the artist, in the well-known picture of the "Ratcatchers:" a subject which he repeated several times. This little catalogue of pictures of the elder Brutus is probably not exhaustive, but it shows how great a study of him Landseer made, and accounts for the great success of the drawing from which the woodcut on PLATE V. is taken. The drawing shows not only mastery of draughtsmanship but also of material, for it is outlined in pencil and worked up with black and white chalk. Here is no uncertainty about where each muscle should come: the dog stands firm on his four feet with a consensus of all parts

FIG. 18.—SUSPICIOUS (1815).

of the body, which shows the animal to have been comprehended as a whole as well as in detail. Nor is this all, for the artist's mind, being sure of the mechanical part, is able to spend its power upon character, and with the least possible work to give not only his body but his soul. Though, as we have seen, he mastered other animals before the dog, his mastery is now as complete over him as over any other animal.

How great that mastery was over the cow is shown by the group under "Brutus" on PLATE V., called "The Attack," where a bulldog has fastened on the throat of the poor beast, and means to hang there till further notice. His sport is, however, likely to be spoiled by the bull in the distance, who is galloping to the rescue with lumbering speed. This sketch, slight and early as it is, may well be reckoned among Landseer's masterpieces; at no time of his life could he have improved upon it in vigour or expression.

This year (1815) is shown, by the specimens of his work in it which we give, to have been one of most careful study and of great progress. He had, at the end of the year, mastered all the domestic and farm animals with the exception of the horse, and that he had nearly achieved a conquest over the difficulties of this animal is shown by his careful study of "A Cart Horse," which will be found in the chapter in this book specially devoted to his treatment of this animal. If we can set down the group in PLATE VI. to this year, he had undoubtedly mastered even the horse; but we think that this must be considered a later work. In addition to this he had begun to pay some attention to landscape and other objects which might be necessary as backgrounds to his figures or to be introduced into his pictures. This is obvious, not only in some of the backgrounds themselves, but also in Fig. 17—a careful study of "Farm Carts" and broken ground remarkable for its clever composition.

Down to this year (1815) all his instruction had been derived from his own study, aided by his father and perhaps his brothers, one of whom at least—Thomas—must have been of use to him in the technical part of etching; but in this year his father took him to Haydon, who gave him his dissections of the lion, and bid him dissect animals and study the Elgin Marbles, both of which precepts Edwin followed; but how much farther Haydon instructed him history does not say. Yet it was in 1815 that Landseer first exhibited in the Royal Academy. Nor, judging from the samples of his work at this period, can we be surprised that his contributions were not rejected. These were "Portrait of a Mule" and "Heads of a Pointer Bitch and Puppy," both the property of W. W. Simpson, Esq., of Beleigh Grange, Essex. The latter was exquisitely engraved by his brother Thomas three years later (1818). We do not know where Mr. Stephens obtained his information that Landseer was among the *honorary* exhibitors of the year, as in our copy of the Royal Academy Catalogue for 1815 he is included in the index of ordinary exhibitors as "Landseer, Master E., at Mr. Landseer's, 33, Foley Street." In the same exhibition also appeared his portrait, done by a young friend who afterwards rose to some note as a portrait painter.* It is No. 450, and called "The Cricketer: a Portrait of Master E. Landseer. *Master J. Hayter.*" The account of Landseer's achievements this year would be incomplete without a notice of his magnificent drawing of an Alpine mastiff, which makes us sceptical as to the correctness of the date ascribed to one of the drawings we are about to mention.

We now come to two studies of dogs (Figs. 18 and 19) one called "Suspicious" and the other the "Dustman's Dog," which show that Landseer was gradually increasing his range of sentiment as well as of skill. In the first he has drawn a dog animated throughout with a feeling characteristic of many dogs, viz., suspicion.†

* Stephens, p. 38.

† The attitude and expression are very much like those of two bulls which he drew in 1811, who are evidently also on the *qui vive.*

On the Common (1815—18).

Plate VI.

Some sound or smell or sight has aroused in him a feeling that something or somebody wants looking after, and he is proceeding to look after him or her or it accordingly. With every sense alive, and with cat-like caution in his feet, he is approaching the neighbourhood of his distrust, and, unless the matter is cleared up to his perfect satisfaction, consequences are likely to ensue not altogether pleasant to the object of his inquiry. What sort of dog he is we confess ourselves unable to say; but it is not, at all events, a sort with which we should like to have a question even as to ancestry, and we would rather admit that he was a mastiff at once than dispute the point. But for the date affixed, the comparative weakness of the action in the hind legs, the anxiety after finish, and the unsatisfactory drawing of the feet would, without comparison with the Alpine mastiff before mentioned, incline us to refer this work to an earlier year.

The other study is dated 1816, and is the first we know in which he drew a dog

Fig. 19.—The Dustman's Dog (1816).

whose character was affected by his master or his master's calling. The sympathy which so curiously exists between a man and his dog was a constant motive of Landseer's work. This is the first, we may say, of a series of such studies which extended through a great part of his life. It is characteristic that he began very low down in the social scale; for he always showed much sympathy with the pariahs of brute society, at least in early life, and this is one. There is great pathos in this figure of the poor, tired, ill-favoured, unconsidered animal, with no claim to birth, accomplishments, or good looks, and quite unaccustomed to delicate fare or good society. His is a hard and humble life, and he seems to know it. To trudge after his master on his daily rounds, and to dine off the bones he can rake out of the rubbish heaps, this is all he can and does expect, considering himself fortunate when, as on the present occasion, he can find a bit of rug to lie upon while he sleeps with one eye open to watch his master's

bell. In this year (1816) he entered the schools of the Royal Academy, and it is not often that that institution admits a student who has so little to learn which the Academy could teach him.

Much, however, he had to learn from his own experience and the growth of his mind, and there is scarcely a drawing of this series which does not chronicle some advance in skill or increase in range of subject. Our next drawing of dogs, "The Braggart" (PLATE VII.), shows his first attempt at tracing the analogy between human and brute character, as the lion in Fig. 3 his first attempt at tracing similarity in appearance. This is also his first attempt at contrast of expression in the same composition, though the same current of thought is seen in the two pictures of the "French Hog" and "British Boar," to which we have before alluded. One notable point in this and the pictures of swine is the peculiar description of humour, which may be called Hogarthian in its endeavour to typify national character in a satirical manner. Indeed, in some respects, Landseer, though a painter of animals, more nearly approaches the spirit of Hogarth than any English painter. The picture for which this is a sketch was exhibited at the British Institution in the year 1820, and was called "The Three Dogs of England, Scotland, and Ireland; from a Poem written by Thomas Bridgman, Esq., in imitation of Burns's 'Twa Dogs.'" The different characters and feelings of the three dogs, both in face and attitude, are wonderfully clever, and they tell their tale with very little overstepping of the limits of expressiveness allowed by nature to dumb animals.

Fig. 20, "Donkeys" (1810), may be usefully compared with the "Study of Donkeys" (1818) on PLATE VII.* It is difficult to say which is the more wonderful work, the first for a boy of eight, or the second for a boy of sixteen; and yet what progress has been made in the eight years! The first is a very careful drawing in pencil, with much character and truth of attitude; but the donkeys are altogether too heavy, too thick in the neck, too massive in the jaws, too blunt in the ears; but there is no defect, that we at least can discover, in the drawing of the beautiful group in PLATE VII. Sketched with the pen, and shaded with washes of sepia, we have the utmost truth obtainable by the means and amount of work employed, both with respect to character, drawing, and light and shade. Having regard to the beauty and variety of attitude, the cleverness of the grouping, and the mastery of execution, it is undoubtedly the most perfect, as it is the most beautiful, of the drawings which illustrate this chapter.

In some of these qualities it is, however, equalled, if not surpassed, by PLATE VI., called "On the Common," but which is evidently intended as a family study of horse,

* And both of them with a most spirited etching of "Donkeys and Foal" (1811), of which there is a copy in the British Museum.

The Braggart (1818).

Study of Donkeys (1818).

Plate VII.

donkey, and mule. Smallest of all, the jackass stands on the right; on the left the mother mare towers above her offspring and its father; behind, but not so hidden by its parents that its hybrid peculiarities are not visible, stands the mule. As a triumph over the difficulties of foreshortening, the ass and mare are more wonderful than anything we have yet shown of Landseer's work, and in skill in obtaining the utmost possible result for the minimum of labour it will bear comparison with the work of any artist of any time. If this was done in the latest year of the three affixed to it (1815-18), it shows that at the age of sixteen he was already without any living rival in the art of drawing animals, except James Ward, R.A.; and it shows, what is more to the purpose of this chapter, that he had added the horse to the list of the animals the difficulties of drawing which he had thoroughly mastered.

To sum up the results of this chapter, between the ages of five and sixteen Landseer learnt how to draw perfectly pigs, cattle, dogs (at least, short-haired dogs), cats, donkeys, and probably sheep and lions. He could draw in pencil, chalk, ink, and sepia, and combine them with perfect mastery. He could etch very well and paint in oils. He had attained considerable skill in composition, and could animate his animals with the character belonging to their kind, with individual character, and, in the case of dogs, with semi-human character and expression. He could take portraits, and had studied the human figure, and he had shown that he possessed pathetic, humorous, and satirical power.

FIG. 20.—DONKEYS (1810—11).

FIG. 21.—TIRED (1820).

CHAPTER II.

1818—24.

THE first chapter brings the artistic biography of Landseer down to the time when, though only sixteen years old, he had mastered most of the technical difficulties of his profession, and was an accomplished artist in the workman sense of the term. He had, however, always been something more; the desire to reach the spirit and essence of his subject being observable in his earliest drawings, and his imagination only waited till his hand was equal in skill to express its conceptions. The description of his mental powers had also been in a great measure shown, as we have already seen; so that on reviewing his work from first to last we scarcely come upon any new faculty after his sixteenth year, although the manner in which his genius developed, and the results it produced, were more striking and various than could possibly have been predicted.

But at present (1818) the power being proved, and the skill attained, the question was, "What will he do with them?" A question this which probably caused the artist a good deal of thinking, and which, as such questions generally are, was resolved, for the most part, by circumstances. We have seen that he never had any doubt about

what the principal subjects of his art were to be: animals, and their associations. It only remained to discover what animals he was to paint, and in what spirit he was to treat them. In this respect also he appears to have been freer from doubt than most artists, and to have made no false starts; but that he was not altogether certain of his chief strength is obvious from the tentative efforts he made in various directions before he struck out the path which was to lead to his unexampled fame; and if he made no false start, there was at least one ambition in art which, after a little while, was, to a great extent, relinquished, viz. what may be called the treatment of animals as materials for compositions in which grandeur of design and robust action were the

FIG. 22.—RESTING (1818).

chief aims. But he did not relinquish these for want of power or from failure in execution, but because they were less in accordance with the spirit of himself and his time, and because success in other directions was sure and easy.

But whatever dreams or intentions the youth of sixteen may have had with regard to the future of his art (and here we may mention that there appear to be no published data from which any notion of the inner life of the artist, now or afterwards, can be derived), there was one great obstacle to the fulfilling of them, viz. that his education as a painter of pictures was unfinished. Wonderful as was the skill he had attained in drawing animals, he was comparatively a beginner in the representation of those various scenes in which his *dramatis personæ* were to play their parts. His knowledge

of landscape was very limited, and his drawings of human figures were not up to the mark required. The little sketch of "Resting," 1818 (Fig. 22), shows, indeed, great care, especially in the drawing of the plants; but it is obvious that it is the work of a prentice hand, and that it would form a very weak background for one of his most carelessly executed animals of this period. This same weakness is shown in the background to the drawing of "An Impending Quarrel" (Fig. 23), where the dog and cat, though by no means so good as some of his animals already given, are spirited, and are little, if at all, aided by the barn and landscape behind. In "A Pigsty" (Fig. 24), and "Milking-time" (Fig. 25), the background is nothing but a few lines to represent

Fig. 23.—An Impending Quarrel (1818).

the interior of a sty and shed respectively, while in the next, "The Donkey-ride" (Fig. 26), the landscape is of the most elementary kind. In the drawing of a deer which heads this chapter (Fig. 21) the landscape is so "conspicuous by its absence" that a writer in the *Art Journal* has been fain to suggest that the animal is leaping over a chasm. In 1822 he obtained the assistance of Mr. Patrick Nasmyth to paint the background of the "Bull and the Frog;" and as late as the year 1824 the artist appears to have been conscious of his comparative shortcomings in this respect, for after he had painted Lion, the Alpine mastiff, which he had drawn perfectly in 1815, or nine years before, he asked its owner, Mr. W. H. de Merle, to allow him to defer painting the background

until he had paid his first visit to Scotland.* For these reasons the period between 1818 and 1825, or the year after his first visit to Scotland, is necessarily a period in which he had to turn his attention so much to study as to be unable to give rein to his creative power except in certain limited directions.

But his conquests over animal drawing enabled him to achieve considerable success as a painter even in this year (1818) by a picture called "Fighting Dogs getting Wind," which was exhibited at the Society of Painters in Oils and Watercolours. It considerably added to his reputation, made by his picture of "A Sleeping Dog," a mastiff, exhibited in their room the preceding year. A very enthusiastic notice of the "Fighting Dogs" is quoted by Mr. Stephens from the *Examiner* of 1818, in which the critic writes, "Did we only see the dog's collar, we should know it was produced by

FIG. 24.—A PIGSTY (1818).

no common hand, so good is it and palpably true. But the gasping, and cavernous, and redly-stained mouths, the flaming eyes, the prostrate dog, and his antagonist standing exultingly over him, the inveterate rage that superior strength inflames but cannot subdue, with the broad and bright relief of the objects, give a wonder-producing vitality to the canvas."† Making some allowance for the writer's enthusiasm, this was evidently a masterly work, remarkable for vigour and truth, and one of a class which is only found in his earlier pictures. "An Impending Quarrel," 1818 (Fig. 23), in which violent action is only imminent, and the spirit of which is humorous rather than passionate, is more characteristic of the painter's work viewed as a whole. According

* Graves, p. 9, No. 80. † Stephens, p. 55.

to the *Art Journal*,* this is Brutus, but whether the first or second of that name† is not certain. In appearance and attitude it is not unlike the picture of 1824, which was Brutus the younger, the artist's own dog, an engraving from which, by Thomas Landseer, appeared in the *Annals of Sporting*. In the 1824 picture the scene is the interior of a stable, and the object of Brutus's attention is an exceedingly evil-looking bulldog, whose head appears through the aperture between the nearly closed door and the side of the stable. If it were not for the chain, which prevents the door from opening

FIG. 25.—MILKING-TIME (1818).

more widely, the "impending quarrel" in this case would be much more serious than that in our woodcut.

Still farther removed from violent action is the clever drawing of "A Pigsty" (Fig. 24), and it only needs a remark here as the last example we have to give of a simple study by the artist of farm-animals, made without any definite intention except practice or pleasure. This may be said to end the series of such studies, in which this collection is so rich; studies which, though they all show cleverness not only of drawing but design, were not meant to be worked up into pictures, but were an end to themselves. In the next we give our last of such studies of farm labourers—"Milking-time" (Fig. 25)—showing great care in study of the attitude of the milker and the folds

* March, 1877. † See Chapter I. p. 22.

of his smock. If we compare this drawing with the well-known picture of "The Maid and the Magpie," we shall see so much difference in so many things that it will appear waste of time to consider the two together; but there is one essential difference between the two which it is worth our while to mention here, and that is, that in the early sketch the human figure was introduced as an appanage to the cow, in the other the cow is an appanage to the human figure. The one shows the commencement of Landseer's love of animals, the latter its conclusion. He first loved them for themselves, and only cared for men (artistically) in so far as they were necessary to illustrate their lives and habits. As he grew older, and became a man himself, and mixed with men, he began

FIG. 26.—THE DONKEY-RIDE (1818).

to look upon animals more and more in relation to men, until at the end animals had little interest for him except in such relation. If he drew a dog it was as the servant of man, or as a pet of a man, and to convey some human sentiment; if he drew stags it was as a sportsman or a poet. There are some, we believe, who think that this was wrong—that he should have devoted his powers to showing us what animals were in themselves, and what life was to them, instead of their human suggestiveness; and we think that in some of his most playful works he subordinated animal truth to human pleasure of a not sufficiently serious kind; but there was nothing ignoble even in his most playful work, and in his highest the human sentiment not only

dignifies the pictures with a noble poetry, which far exceeds in value any loss of purely animal spirit, but dignifies the animals themselves by extending their influence for good and for pleasure beyond the limits assigned to their sphere of intelligence.

Landseer was of far too kindly a nature ever to take pleasure in the sufferings of animals, and we very seldom find him even making pictorial fun out of their misfortunes, but instances of this do now and then occur, and one of them is "The Donkey-ride" (Fig. 26), where a boy is riding a tethered donkey, and is urging it forward with a stick, while a dog behind barks at the poor brute's heels. This drawing

FIG. 27.—ON THE SCENT (1819).

is, in the motive of its humour, something like one of Landseer's etchings called "The Sweeps," belonging to the year 1822, in which a poor, broken-kneed, bareboned scarecrow of a horse is bestrided by two sweeps and a seedy-looking youth, the latter riding on the haunches of the animal with his face to the tail, while before the overladen screw there limps a small dog with a ludicrous gait as if in imitation of the horse. In this year he exhibited a picture of a donkey at the Royal Academy which was praised by Wilkie in a letter to Haydon.*

* Stephens, p. 55.

Next we come to two studies of sporting dogs, both intended for setters we presume, but "On the Scent" (Fig. 27) looks like a cross between a pointer and setter, with a good deal of its hair rubbed off. It is evidently very unfinished, but shows great spirit and character in the eagerness of its attitude and the way in which its long supple body accommodates itself to the unevenness of the ground; the other—"Setter Dogs" (Fig. 28)—is a very slight but clever sketch. These dogs look more like spaniels than setters. This year seems to have been principally devoted to studies of dogs, all the works of it chronicled in Mr. Graves's catalogues being pictures of these animals or compositions containing them. One of his pictures exhibited at the British Institution this year was a "Newfoundland Dog and Rabbit," in which the

FIG. 28.—SETTER DOGS (1819).

dog is fine and the rabbit perhaps finer. It was sold at Christie's in July, 1877, for £388 10s., and belonged to Mr. Dymoke, the Hereditary Champion.

Next year was exhibited at the same gallery the "Braggart," of which we give the original sketch (PLATE VII.), and also "Alpine Mastiffs reanimating a Distressed Traveller," a picture which made a great sensation, and which still, by means of the engraving by his father, John Landseer, assisted by Thomas, retains its popularity. Of this picture we also give the original sketch (Fig. 30)—a very rough one—in which one dog is put in and the position of the other indicated. This picture was the result of the artist's studies from Alpine mastiffs, of which the extent is shown by his pictures of those animals. One called "Lion," and belonging to a

Mr. Boody or Bullock, was drawn in 1815 and exhibited at the Society of Painters in Oil and Watercolours in 1817, and "A Sleeping Mastiff" was exhibited at the British Institution in 1818. In the picture of 1820 the animal to the left is Cæsar, the son of Mr. Bullock's Lion. In 1824 he drew Mr. W. H. de Merle's Lion, of which mention has already been made.* The picture of 1820 is very interesting as showing how cleverly he managed to get over the difficulties of the landscape, when he had a good subject which called upon him to exert his imagination and ingenuity. Certainly

FIG. 29.—DENIZENS OF THE ROCKS (1820).

at this time he had never seen mountains, and yet he was able to conceive and execute on a large scale a background of an Alpine scene in winter, and one effective in design and sufficiently truthful to serve its purpose. When one remembers that four years later he would not paint in a background to a portrait of one of the same dogs until he had been to Scotland, one wonders at the temerity of youth, and the triumph of determination over difficulties which is one of the true signs of genius.

On PLATE VIII. will be found two drawings of the same year (1820), which afford a

* Page 33.

The End of all Labour (1820).

Waking Up (1820).

Plate VIII.

contrast which might be made the subject of a sermon; the lusty, violent, bloodthirsty lion waking up refreshed and hungering after some new prey, and the poor harmless overworked horse who will never wake again. But the contrast which concerns us most is that between the spirits of the two styles: the one pathetic, realistic; the other violent and imaginative. The first was simply a study made in a knacker's yard—an unusual sort of study, but still nothing more nor less than one instigated by his usual feeling for animals and his habits of industry; the other the result of his early boyish semi-romantic dreams of lions, and the precepts of Haydon about "high art," and perhaps ambition to rank with Rubens and Snyders, all stimulated anew by a recent incident —the death of one of the lions at Exeter Change—which enabled him to make fresh studies from dissection of a real specimen. In this year he exhibited two very large canvases at the British Institution, one, eight feet by six, "A Lion disturbed at his Repast," and the other "A Lion enjoying his Repast"—and next year "A Prowling Lion" at the Royal Academy, for one or other of which this was probably a study. That the spirit of "high art" was upon him is evident, moreover, from the fact that he turned this drawing of the horse in the knacker's yard (or rather a replica of it) into a "composition," by adding a landscape and calling it "The Vulture's Prey." This was etched by Mr. C. G. Lewis for Mr. Hogarth, to whom the drawing belonged; but Mr. Lewis asked for and obtained the drawing as payment for the plate. Fine as both these drawings certainly are, we should value the dead cart-horse above the living lion. Whether the drawing "Denizens of the Rocks" (Fig. 29) was made in connection with the "Vulture's Prey" we do not know; but it is interesting as having been made in the same year, and for its being the first drawing of birds by Landseer of which we have any record, except a parrot in the South Kensington Museum.

Belonging to the same year, and showing the same kind of ambition, is the fine "Bull attacked by Dogs" (PLATE IX.), a drawing which it is somewhat remarkable that he did not utilise as the subject of a picture. A part of the composition, however, he did use, not only once, but twice, as any one can see who takes the trouble to compare it with the still finer "Contending Group after Nature," engraved by Thomas Landseer for a work called "Twenty-six Engravings of Lions, Tigers," &c., to which we have previously called attention,* and of which a republication was issued some years after by Mr. H. Bohn, accompanied by Landseer's illustrations to the "Annals of Sporting." In this group a lion takes the place of the bull, a leopard that of the dog under the belly of the bull, and a tiger on his back that of the dog in front. A similar arrangement will also be found in the picture of "Chevy Chase," the bull being replaced by a stag.

The year 1820 is also remarkable for his first studies of an animal from which he was to draw inspiration for some of his most beautiful and noble pictures. Though he

* Page 4.

Bull attacked by Dogs (1821).

Plate IX.

could scarcely have had an opportunity of seeing red deer in their natural state, or even of seeing one hunted in England, these first drawings (Figs. 21 and 32) show a great feeling for the animal, and must have been the result of study. The sketches of eyes in the corner of Fig. 21, and sketches of other parts of the animal in the possession of Mr. C. G. Lewis, attest the study.

The two drawings of "Vixen" (PLATE X.) are assigned to the years 1821 and 1824. Vixen, Brutus, and Boxer were Landseer's three dogs, and were painted together in a picture called the "Ratcatchers," exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1821.* In

FIG. 30.—ALPINE MASTIFFS (1820).

our eyes the "Vixen" stated to belong to 1824 is so far better drawn as to justify the later date, but we are puzzled by a date on the drawing itself which looks like 1816. Vixen was a thoroughbred Scotch terrier and a famous ratter.

In 1822 he executed his first lithograph from a picture of a Labrador bitch exhibited in the British Institution in that year and called "A Watchful Sentinel." Of this picture we give the sketch in our chapter on dogs.† He also continued his compositions from

* There were three or four pictures of this name exhibited at different exhibitions in various years.

† Fig. 88, "Cora."

VIXEN (1821).

VIXEN (1824).

PLATE X.

beasts of prey in a series of six very fine drawings, engraved by Thomas Landseer, and published in the work lately alluded to as containing the "Contending Group after Nature." One of these—a lion with his paw on a sceptre and a background of rock, which forms the "engraved title" of the volume—has a calmness and fulness of dignity scarcely surpassed by his noble sculptures on the Nelson Monument. In this year he also began the series of seventeen etchings which were collected and published afterwards. The first of these is the "Dogs worrying a Frog," and the next "The Ladies' Pets"—a pug dog and a spaniel, of exceeding fatness, toiling after their mistresses on a hot day. In the next year (1824) he added three to the series—"A Shepherd's Dog," "The Beggar," and "Donkeys and Horses"—all of which are excellent in their different ways, but all showing the deficiency in landscape to which we have before alluded. This, when he had visited Scotland the year after, was amply supplied by the lovely "Travellers' Rest," "The Spring," and "The Mountain Torrent," to say nothing of the landscapes to the other etchings of this year—"The Eagle and Dead Red Deer" and "The Watchman."

But the careful way in which he studied landscape, and the high degree of skill he had reached in 1824, especially in the drawing of leafage and herbage, are shown in the two drawings in PLATE XXXI., the original of one of which, "The Angler's Guard," is in the Sheepshanks collection, and is almost as brilliant and minute in touch as a miniature on ivory; but the touch is what Wilkie complained of as "niggling," and the colour crude. He was apparently spoiling his early pictures, as he did some of his early drawings, by over, or rather wrong, finish. But during these six years he had done a great deal of work, shown a wonderful facility for design, and achieved success in everything he attempted. And there was a stamp upon even his slightest study which distinguished it as essentially greater in conception than the work of other men. The chief classes of work at this time may be said to have been (1) the grand style of animal painting in emulation of the old masters, to which belong his fine compositions and studies of the carnivora; (2) humorous composition, which may be subdivided into the humours of animals and humorous aspects of animals—to the first belong such as "Dogs worrying a Frog" and "An Impending Quarrel" (Fig. 23), to the latter such as "A Donkey-ride" (Fig. 26) and "The Ladies' Pets;" (3) pathetic compositions, such as "The Vulture's Prey"—see "The End of all Labour" (1820), PLATE VIII.—and the study of the harried deer (Figs. 21 and 32); (4) studies of animal character and habits, wild and trained, such as the "Ratcatchers," the various sporting dogs, the "Alpine Mastiff reanimating a Dead Traveller" (Fig. 30), and the "Hare and Foxes" (PLATE XXX.).

His greatest successes in exhibited pictures during these years were—if we may judge from the popularity of engravings—the "Alpine Mastiffs" (1820), the "Ratcatchers" (1821), the "Larder Invaded" (1822)—which obtained a premium from

the British Institution of £150—and the "Cat's Paw" (1824), the last of which is perhaps now the most generally known. The sketch from which our woodcut (Fig. 31) of this subject is taken differs in several respects from the picture which was exhibited at the British Institution in 1824, and now in the possession of the Earl of Essex, who bought it for £120. In the picture the monkey is on a rush-bottomed chair, and has got the cat into a more comfortable position (for himself). She is well up under his arm, and her face, with its impotent rage, comes out in

Fig. 31.—The Cat's Paw (1824).

better contrast against the cunning and cruel profile of the monkey, whose face is less humorous and more ruthless and determined than in the sketch. He has alsc guarded himself better against the attacks of the cat, both by a cloth in which she is wrapped and the position in which he holds her. In the picture one of her feet is digging its claws into her own flank instead of the monkey's back. The chafing-dish is replaced by a stove, which is somewhat higher and more convenient for the monkey, while the agony and sense of sound is increased by the presence of two kittens, one in a

clothes-basket and one out, who bewail their mother's predicament with unavailing cries. An upset coalscuttle, a broken dish, and scattered clothes, show that the triumph of the monkey has not been attained without a fearful preliminary scrimmage.

To this year belong his first illustration, "Sancho Panza and Dapple," now at South Kensington, and his first portrait-group, "The Bedford Family."

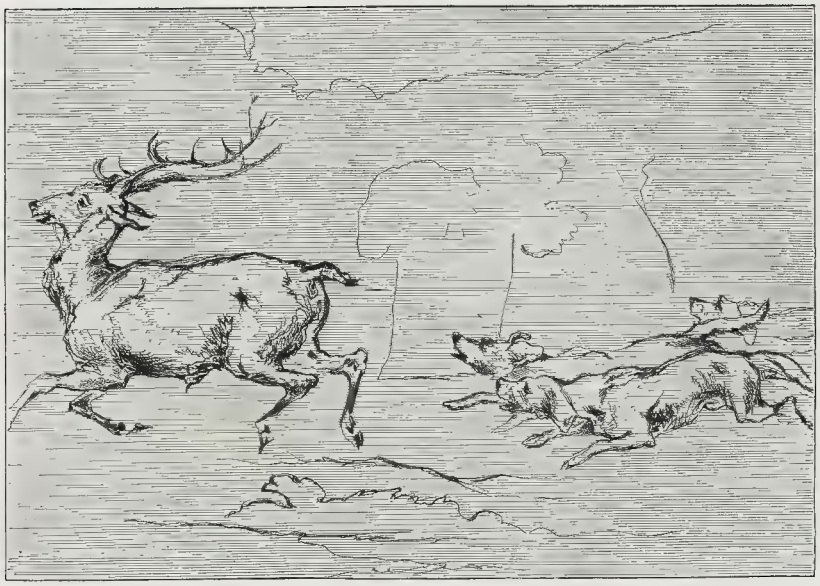


FIG. 32.—THE CHASE (1820).

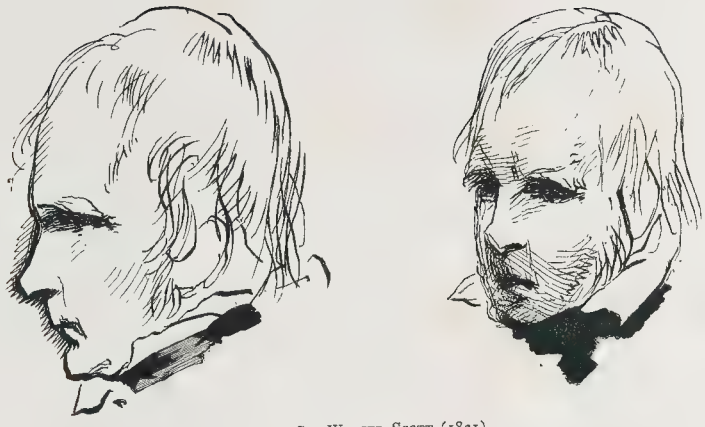


Fig. 33.—Sir Walter Scott (1831).

CHAPTER III.

1824—1834.

THE year of 1824 is to be specially marked in the history of Landseer's art as that in which he went to Scotland with Sir Walter Scott. This event, which would be an important one in any person's history, had for his art effects which amounted to little less than a regeneration. Fond of nature and animals as he always was, that fondness became now a more living and concentrated force under the influence of wild and romantic scenery and the characteristic beauty of its animals. To the latter alone belongs a poetry of form and character which breathes a completely different spirit to any to be found in association with the southern country. The Grampians are not more opposite to Salisbury Plain, in the ideas which they inspire, than a deerhound to a foxhound, a blackcock to a partridge, a collie to an English shepherd's dog, or a red to a fallow deer. To a mind like that of Landseer, which had always the strongest sympathy with whatever was great or noble or refined, the introduction to Scotland must have been like the fulfilment of an ideal, especially under the auspices of a man like Sir Walter Scott, who, now in the zenith of his fame and before the blight of pecuniary difficulties had come upon him (before even the shadow of them had been seen in the distance), must have been the man of all others to stimulate and direct his imagination. What personal influence the great novelist and poet had upon Sir Edwin we do not know, except from his art,

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